

In the Claims:

Claims 1-9 and 22-26 (cancelled)

13. (Amended) The apparatus of claim 11 ~~or 12~~, wherein the small openings comprise at least one of nozzles, water jet arrays, and water knives.

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the small openings comprise at least one of nozzles, water jet arrays, and water knives.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the liquid distribution unit is configured to deliver liquid through the opening of the liquid distribution unit at a pressure sufficient to form a high pressure stream of liquid for loosening slurry embedded in the polishing pad.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the liquid distribution unit is configured to deliver liquid through the series of small openings at a pressure sufficient to form a high pressure stream of liquid for loosening slurry embedded in the polishing pad.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the liquid recovery unit is configured to retrieve at least liquid, slurry, and debris from a surface of the polishing pad.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the apparatus is configured to condition the polishing pad by removing at least slurry, introduced during a CMP process, and debris, generated during the CMP process, from a surface of the polishing pad.

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the liquid recovery unit is disposed relative to the liquid distribution unit such that at least slurry and debris dislodged from a surface of the polishing pad by liquid from the liquid distribution unit is removed prior to the slurry and debris re-lodging in the surface of the polishing pad.

33. (New) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the liquid recovery unit and the liquid distribution unit are disposed adjacent to each other.

34. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a housing protecting the liquid recovery unit and the liquid distribution unit, the housing disposed relative to the polishing pad to prevent slurry and debris removed from the polishing pad and contained within the housing from contaminating an area of the polishing pad surrounding the housing.

35. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the opening of the liquid distribution unit comprises a shape suitable to deliver liquid through the opening of the liquid distribution unit to form a stream of liquid that is dispensed at a pressure sufficient to loosen slurry from the polishing pad.

36. (New) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the openings comprise shapes suitable to deliver liquid through the openings to form a stream of liquid that is dispensed at a pressure sufficient to loosen slurry from the polishing pad.

37. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a stretching mechanism configured to stretch and tense the polishing pad to open pores on a surface of the polishing pad.

38. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a slurry recovery unit configured to remove loose slurry from a surface of the polishing pad.

39. (New) The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the slurry recovery unit is disposed upstream of the liquid distribution unit.

40. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the apparatus is configured to remove slurry and debris from the polishing pad without the use of abrasives.

41. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the opening comprises one of a nozzle, a water jet array, and a water knife.

42. (New) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the liquid distribution unit is configured to deliver liquid selected from the group consisting of at least one of water, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, any combination of water, potassium hydroxide, and ammonium hydroxide with hydrogen peroxide, or any combination of water, potassium hydroxide, ammonium hydroxide, and hydrogen peroxide with chelating agents.

43. (New) The apparatus of claim 42, wherein the chelating agents are selected from the group consisting of at least one of EDTA and citric acid.

44. (New) An apparatus for conditioning a polishing pad in a semiconductor wafer polishing device, the apparatus comprising:

a liquid distribution unit forming at least one opening, the opening directed at the polishing pad;

a liquid recovery unit positioned downstream from the liquid distribution unit and in communication with the polishing pad, the liquid recovery unit forming at least one opening; and

a containment unit that stores slurry removed from the polishing pad for reclamation of the slurry.

45. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, further comprising a slurry recovery unit configured to remove loose slurry from a surface of the polishing pad.

46. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the liquid distribution unit is configured to deliver liquid through the opening of the liquid distribution unit at a pressure sufficient to form a high pressure stream of liquid for loosening slurry embedded in the polishing pad.

47. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the liquid distribution unit forms a series of small openings that span at least half of a width of the polishing pad.

48. (New) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the liquid distribution unit is configured to deliver liquid through the series of small openings at a pressure sufficient

to form a high pressure stream of liquid for loosening slurry embedded in the polishing pad.

49. (New) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the openings comprise shapes suitable to deliver liquid through the openings to form a stream of liquid that is dispensed at a pressure sufficient to loosen slurry from the polishing pad.

50. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the liquid recovery unit is disposed relative to the liquid distribution unit such that at least slurry and debris dislodged from a surface of the polishing pad by liquid from the liquid distribution unit is removed prior to the slurry and debris re-lodging in the surface of the polishing pad.

51. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the opening of the liquid distribution unit comprises a shape suitable to deliver liquid through the opening of the liquid distribution unit to form a stream of liquid that is dispensed at a pressure sufficient to loosen slurry from the polishing pad.

52. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the apparatus is configured to condition the polishing pad by removing at least the slurry, introduced during a CMP process, and debris, generated during the CMP process, from a surface of the polishing pad.

53. (New) The apparatus of claim 44, wherein the apparatus is configured to remove the slurry and debris from the polishing pad without the use of abrasives.